



PLANNING COMMISSION

Department of Urban Planning & Design • P.O. Box 27210 • Tucson, AZ 85726-7210

DATE: April 5, 2006

TO: Planning Commission
Albert Elias

FROM: Albert Elias, AICP
Executive Secretary

SUBJECT: *Activity Center Planning*

Issue-

This is an informational item regarding the Urban Planning & Design Department's work program related to planning for activity centers. The Commission raised the issue of activity centers during its March 1, 2006, public hearing for the *Arcadia Alamo Area Plan Amendment*. The discussion focused on the growth of the Tucson Medical Center area as a regional activity center and the impacts of current planning efforts (e.g., Regional Transportation Authority Plan) on that growth.

The intent is to refine activity center planning in conjunction with the development of an infill plan that will assist with prioritizing and focusing city resources. A key responsibility of the staff infill planner, Rebecca Ruopp, hired in the fall of 2005, is the development of this infill plan. Attachment 1 outlines steps associated with the Department's overall infill planning effort.

Department of Urban Planning and Design Infill Planning Activities

In its examination of activity centers, department staff is undertaking the following tasks. These tasks are anticipated to be completed by Fall 2006.

1. Review and consider refinement of the General Plan "activity center" definition¹, including subcategories of activity centers (e.g., regional activity centers, community-level activity centers), and preparation of checklists with indicators for viable activity centers at each level (e.g., potential for pedestrian and transit-oriented development).

¹ The *General Plan Land Use Element, 2001*, defines activity centers as areas that "promote a planned and integrated combination of commercial, office, entertainment, service, educational, employment, and residential uses within a focused area."

2. Preliminary identification of established activity centers, emerging activities, and potential future activity centers based on the activity center criteria developed in Step 1 above.

The *General Plan*, 2001, includes activity center locations on its map entitled "Tucson's Generalized Distribution of Land Use Patterns."

3. Review of existing conditions and plans, other city and regional planning initiatives, and stakeholder input to identify potential constraints and opportunities for current activity center growth and new activity center development.

Examples of existing plans and current planning initiatives that will be considered are the General Plan; Neighborhood and Area Plans; Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Plan and the related City Corridor Studies, the Major Streets & Routes Plan, and the Urban Landscape Management Plan.

It will be important, for instance, to consider the relationship of high volume commuter routes as designated in the RTA Plan to growing and new activity centers. The advance Corridor Studies that the City has committed to undertaking if the RTA Plan is approved by voters this spring will provide an opportunity to conduct detailed planning for both north-south and east-west city corridors. Several of the corridors that will be studied include established or emerging activity centers, such as the Craycroft Corridor, which includes the Tucson Medical Center; Speedway Boulevard, which includes the University of Arizona area; and Oracle Road, which includes the Tucson Mall area.

4. Refinement of Step 2 activity center locations based on constraints and opportunities identified in Step 3.
5. Development of policies and guidelines to enhance current activity centers and promote new activity centers that will help meet community goals and objectives, such as pedestrian and transit oriented development, economic vitality, and connectivity, while being sensitive to community and neighborhood character.

At the April 5th Planning Commission meeting, Rebecca Ruopp will make a presentation that provides more illustrative information.

INFILL PLAN DEVELOPMENT TASKS

as of 4/06

☒ Task Completed
 ☐ Task Underway
 ☐ Task Upcoming

Steps	Status (Est. Time of Completion)
a. Develop a vision statement for the city's infill development strategy.	Completed. (2005)
b. Hire a consultant to assist in the development of the infill plan.	Hired. (Sept. 2005)
c. At the direction of the commission and in coordination with the Infill Subcommittee and the Neighborhood Infill Coalition, develop infill planning tools, such as the Residential Cluster Project Ordinance, the Neighborhood Overlay Zone Ordinance, the Mixed Use Infill Zone Ordinance, and Design Guidelines.	Ordinances in final review and revision. Design Guidelines still under review. (Summer/Fall 2006)
d. Undertake a prototype project for the development of Neighborhood Plans with the Jefferson Park and Miramonte Neighborhoods. Other neighborhoods interested in developing neighborhood plans may shadow this prototype process.	Drachman Institute retained as consultant. Jefferson Park first meeting, 3/22 nd ; Miramonte, 4/19. (Fall 2006)
e. Initiate a public outreach program to consider the role of infill development in addressing city growth issues and meeting city goals and objectives (e.g., alternative transportation, increased connectivity).	Initial workshop held; roundtable plan under consideration. (Winter 2006)
f. Elaborate on the definition of "infill" as it relates to the city's growth areas and to particular types of uses (e.g., mixed use and activity centers).	Review of definitions underway. (May 2006)
g. Map inventory of potential infill parcels in the context of surrounding existing land uses, existing plans, and zoning. (Begin with Central Core and Mid-City areas.)	Inventory plan under development. (June 2006)
h. Identify and map constraints and opportunities based on ■ existing conditions ■ current plans and planning initiatives (e.g., General Plan, Strategic Plan, Neighborhood and Area Plans; Major Streets & Routes update; Urban Landscape Management Plan; and the Regional Transportation Plan and related City Corridor Studies), and ■ stakeholder and public input.	 (Summer 2006)
h. Conduct two prototype charrettes to consider infill site planning issues for (1) a mixed-use site at an arterial/arterial or arterial/collector intersection, and (2) an emerging activity center. Document process, results, and lessons learned.	Prototype charrette process developed. (Fall 2006)
i. Develop preliminary infill plan that will assist with prioritizing and focusing city resources.	 (Winter 2006.)